

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANTANA 00159 311140Z
ACTION MMO-02

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EA-10 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 AID-05
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06
PRS-01 SP-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /054 W
-----099561 312122Z /62

R 310800Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0153
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANTANANATIBO 0159

E O 11652: GDS
RAGS: EAID PINT MA CG
SUBJ: CERP 0002-PRC ROADBUILDING IN MADAGASCAR

REF: 77 ANT A-035 (B) ANT 0021 (C) ANT 0058 (D) ANT 0111 (NOTAL)

1. (BEGIN UNCLAS) GOVERNMENT PRESS BULLETIN JANUARY 30
REPORTS MEETING JANUARY 27 BETWEEN SECRETARY GENERAL OF
TAMATAVE FARITANY (PROVINCE) AND PRC OFFICIALS IN CHARGE OF
BUILDING ROAD CONNECTING TAMATAVE PORT WITH ANTANANARIVO
(SEE REFS).

2. ACCORDING TO BRIEF ARTICLES, ONE HUNDRED MALAGASY TECHNICIANS
AND THIRTY CHINESE ARE DIRECTING THIS WORK. A HEADQUARTERS
FOR THE WORKSHOP WILL BE LOCATED IN TAMATAVE SINCE THE
NECESSARY SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT TO COMPLETE THE WORK WILL
BE OFFLOADED AT THE PORT. THIS WILL FACILITATE THE DISPATCHING
OF THE EQUIPMENT TO THE WORK SITES. THE LEADER OF PRC
TEAM ALSO INDICATED THAT THE PLANNED WORK FORCE MIGHT BE
INCREASED IF NEED BE. (END UNCLAS).

3. COMMENT: RECENT FLURRY OF PRESS REPORTS DETAILING
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MEETINGS OF PRC AND MALAGASY OFFICIALS ON THIS ROAD PROJECT
IS INTRIGUING. WHILE PROJECT HAS BEEN IN WORKS FOR ABOUT
TWO YEARS, APPARENTLY ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION HAS YET TO BEGIN.
THIS IS CONFIRMED BY REFS B, C AND D AND LATEST PRESS REPORT
WHICH ALL CLAIM THAT WORK IS ABOUT TO BEGIN. FOUR PRESS
ARTICLES IN AS MANY WEEKS LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT SERIOUS
PROBLEMS MUST HAVE ARISEN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT AND/OR THE PRC

EMBASSY ARE NOW ATTEMPTING TO PAPER OVER WITH PRESS RELEASES. BIZARRE CALL, REPORTED REF D, TO "BETTER APPRECIATE THE SACRIFICES OF THE CHINESE TECHNICIANS AND EXPERTS," SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THERE HAS BEEN FRICTION BETWEEN THE CHINESE AND THE MALAGASY BUREAUCRACY. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF DIFFICULTIES WITH PEASANTS ALONG THE ROUTE OF THE NEW ROAD. FOR SEVERAL MONTHS WE HAVE SUSPECTED THAT THE PRC WISHED TO IMPORT MORE WORKERS THAN THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PERMIT AND THAT PERHAPS THERE MAY HAVE BEEN DISAGREEMENT OVER IMPORTATION OF PRC GOODS TO FINANCE LOCAL COSTS. FURTHERMORE, THE PRC AID-GIVERS MAY HAVE ENCOUNTERED THE SAME LESS-THAN-ENTHUSIASTIC BUREAUCRACY THAT OTHER DONORS HAVE FOUND HERE. THE REFERENCE IN THE LATEST ARTICLE TO PORT DELIVERIES MAY INDICATE THAT THE TAMATAVE PORT, KNOWN FOR ITS INEFFICIENCY, IS FURTHER HAMPERING THE PRC ROAD-BUILDERS' EFFORTS.

4. PARA 3 ABOVE IS NINETY PERCENT SPECULATION, BUT THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRC MUST BE EMBARRASSED BY THE LACK OF PROGRESS TO DATE, AND THESE FOUR RECENT ARTICLES ARE PROBABLY AN OFFICIAL ATTEMPT TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, "WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE PRC ROAD PROJECT?" BARRETT

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